

# Call for balanced tech policies to maximise benefits from GM crops

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AGRICULTURAL experts on Wednesday emphasised the importance of developing well-balanced technology policies to maximise the benefits of genetically modified (GM) crops. These discussions took place during a session on genome editing, biosafety for product development, and socioeconomic considerations at the ongoing 16th Agricultural Science Congress (ASC).

Experts believe that the agricultural sector requires a broader and multi-dimensional framework to fully comprehend the net social value of technol-

ogy introduced in the field. They suggest fostering greater collaboration and consultation between agricultural and biological scientists and social scientists.

Dr R Ramakumar from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, and a part-time member of the Kerala Planning Board, emphasised the need for government research institutions in India to prioritize risk assessment, risk management, hazard identification, and socio-cultural impact analysis when dealing with agricultural technologies.

He stressed that a deep understanding of socioeconomic and sustainability implications is essential for effectively implementing emerging genomic technologies in the agriculture sector. Drawing from the example of Bt cotton in India, he noted that this technology was not a widespread failure, as often perceived. Instead, it offers valuable insights



Dr R Ramakumar

to bridge the gap between technology implementation and policy discourse. Addressing social impacts, such as displacement and inequality, can be a vital part of this process.